

Honoring the Life of Charles "Dick" Webb

March 25, 2009

Mr. Speaker, I rise this afternoon in recognition of a respected business leader in the State of Kansas who died earlier this week. Charles R. "Dick" Webb of Pittsburg, Kansas, and founder of Watco Companies passed away on Monday, March 23, at the young age of 70. He was a great Kansan and an exemplary American who will be greatly missed.

Dick Webb made his mark on the Kansas business community through Watco, a company he founded in 1983 along with his wife, Kaye Lynne. Watco was started literally at the kitchen table. A rail service provider, the Webbs' startup would evolve into a titan of Midwestern business. Watco Companies now supports 2,000 employees in over 26 States.

This expansive network of Watco employees and products has benefited millions of Americans through efficient commodity shipping and gainful employment. Watco railroad tracks continue to move the products that move America. Food and fuel find their way across our Nation's heartland thanks to the foresight of Dick Webb. His endurance in times of uncertainty in his industry allowed Watco to emerge as a leader in rail service and technology. Entrepreneurship is highly valued in our society, and Dick epitomized that quality.

With the success Watco experienced, it would have been easy to relocate the company's headquarters to a more densely populated area. But being a loyal Kansan, Dick remained in Pittsburg to grow his business and his community. Whether it was his support for his alma mater, Pittsburg State University, or his support for other local startup businesses, Dick added to the overall quality of life for every Pittsburg resident.

Dick is survived by his wife, his two children, Susan Lundy and Rick Webb, as well as six grandchildren who all were raised to remain in Pittsburg. But knowing of Dick's devotion to his employees, it may well be said that he is survived by his Watco family as well. The employees and their families that aided the building of Watco continue to benefit from Dick's work and leadership.

The legacy he left on our State and this Nation will continue to benefit us all.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that you and Members of the U.S. House of Representatives join me in honoring Dick Webb and the lasting legacy he achieved with his life.